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CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Elimination of the Exploitation of Child Labour, submitted pursuant to Sub-Commission resolution 1995/16

Addendum

The present document contains information submitted by the Governments of Australia and Latvia.

GE.96-12777 (E)

Australia

[Original: English]
[18 June 1996]

1. In December 1994 the then Government of Australia established a high-level tripartite working party to examine ways of further promoting labour standards in the Asian and Pacific region. The Working Party received over 20 submissions from a range of union and industry groups and government and non-governmental organizations. Its report was completed during the term of the previous Government, just prior to the federal elections which led to a change of Government. The new Government agreed to release the paper as a contribution public debate on the issues, and the report was published in May 1996. Key issues considered in the report include:

The effectiveness of any prohibition on imports of goods produced in conditions which contravene key ILO conventions;

The role of development cooperation and technical assistance in promoting labour standards;

Ways of strengthening international approaches to the development and implementation of core labour standards, in particular through ILO and the United Nations;

A possible voluntary code of conduct for Australian business overseas, covering exploitative child labour and other internationally recognized core labour standards;

Support for consumer-driven practices, such as product labelling, which help to eliminate exploitative child labour.

2. Some Australian companies are now developing codes of conduct and ethical procurement policies with respect to the purchasing of products of exploitative child labour. The Government commends the policies of these companies and encourages business to develop voluntary codes of conduct and labelling schemes.

3. The key priority of the Government of Australia for the aid programme is to increase the focus on poverty alleviation and the basic needs of developing countries, key factors in addressing the problem of exploitative child labour. The aid programme directly supports children's rights through a range of social and economic development projects that seek to overcome poverty on a sustainable basis. The Government also emphasizes the importance of assistance directed at primary level education, with a particular focus on women and girls. In particular:

There are a number of "AusAID" projects under way which aim to improve the lives of children working under hazardous or forced labour conditions for little or no wages;

The Government has commissioned a review of the aid programme. The review will consider possible new directions and opportunities in order further to support the rights of children in the aid programme.

Latvia

[Original: English]
[27 June 1996]

1. The Ministry of Science and Education is working on arrangements for the registration of all school-age children to ensure the compulsory education of every child residing in Latvia. The Ministry also supervises the implementation of the "State Programme concerning the Protection of the Rights of the Child and the Transgression of Laws by Minors for 1995-1997". The Programme has three basic directions: legal measures, organizational measures and preventive training work.

2. In addition, the Centre for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, working under the supervision of the Ministry of Science and Education:

(a) Has prepared and submitted suggestions to the National Council on Crime Prevention and the Criminological Research Centre on the promotion of legislation, programmes and prevention in the sphere of protection of the rights of the child in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(b) Coordinates the "State Programme concerning Protection of the Rights of the Child and the Transgression of Laws by Minors for 1995-1997" and implements the measures envisaged in this programme, in collaboration with the competent ministries and the State institutions;

(c) Has elaborated and prepared for publishing teaching materials for children and adults "Your Rights", in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(d) Has elaborated two programmes, "How to coordinate the protection of the rights of the child" and "Protection of the rights of the child in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" for the training of teachers, medical officers, leaders of youth organizations, social workers and other specialists;

(e) Organizes seminars on protection of the rights of the child and the problems of prevention in order to coordinate action among State institutions and public organizations (NGOs)